

Martin L. Warsing House  
108 Wordsworth Avenue  
Llyswen Neighborhood  
Altoona  
Blair County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5911

HABS  
PA  
7-ALTO  
156

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MARTIN L. WARSING HOUSE

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Location: 108 Wordsworth Avenue

Date of Erection: 1915

Description: A large and rather successful combination of Dutch Colonial and Craftsman stylistic features, this wide, two-story, front-gambrel house has a symmetrical facade, bevelled-wood siding, and a small, shed-roof dormer on either side. Wide, flat moldings outline the sidelighted entry and the broad, triple-sash windows flanking it, which are further divided into geometric patterns of small lights surrounding larger central ones. This detail persists in the windows of the dormer and a projecting bay on the south side of the house, but the windows in the dormer and two more bays on the north elevation have been replaced. The deep, full front porch has battered brick pillars connected by a simple wood railing.

History: James Spence, who was born in 1909, remembers a playground and ball field on the west side of Wordsworth Avenue in the flat area below the stretch of Holmes Avenue that was never built. It was an informal park, cleared and maintained for the children by parents in the neighborhood. Martin L. Warsing, a tinner, was first taxed for a house on this lot in the center of the old park in 1915, four years after he purchased the lot for \$400. If that building date is accurate, the park of Jim Spence's memory was short-lived. The 1914-15 city directory shows Warsing residing on "Wadsworth," a common misspelling of Wordsworth that perhaps also indicates how the word was pronounced locally. Between 1919, when Warsing sold it for \$3,400, and 1975, when it became the property of Grace United Church of Christ, the house belonged to a teller at Central Trust Company for one year, a dentist for twenty-three years, and a druggist for thirty-two years. After using it as a parsonage for several years, the church sold it to the present owners in 1986.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 203/354, 271/200, 273/312, 318/8, 318/10, 319/361, 408/586, 427/39; 479/79, 977/592, 1127/618. Interview: James Spence, 314 Coleridge Ave., July 18, 1989.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of Llyswen (HABS No. PA-5787) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Kathy Edwards in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Edwards's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.